2: Hulstaert
593

Mongo FO32

/For information concerning family relationships among the Nkundu, see category 116, pp. 11, 22-26, 33-39, 51-52, 108, 139, 217, 222, 244-268, 271, 283, 285-289, 297, 299-300, 309, 391-393, 422-423, 424-428, 479-480, and 482-483./

000 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
556 wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
593 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of
595 tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
593 for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
584 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
606 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
342 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

583 [535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity, there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent

837 When a wife of a polygynist had illicit relations with another
586 man of the same village, this was called Bonsamba. When she had such relations with a man of another village, this was called Isoke. As we have observed, the ordinary wives of the harem often had such relations. When the woman eloped with her bonsamba or isoke, or with whomever it was, she was pursued by her husband or owner, who tried to get her back. If the wife refused, negotiations over the bride price began.

If an agreement was reached or if a pledge was given as guarantee for the payment, the first bond was considered broken, and the woman was considered bound to this second man, even though he had been her bonsamba or isoke.

It might also happen that the first husband was so jealous that he did not want to make any agreement; then he attempted to kill either the guilty wife or her second husband. If the woman became
● 593 ill at the home of her husband, he went to tell her family and had to
758 give a security to the family.
583 Often the family came to get the wife, in order to be able to care for her better. If, in such a case, the wife [538] died at the home of her family, there were no further difficulties about the bride price, according to their customs. If, however, the bride price had still not been completely paid, the family asked their son-in-law to pay the remainder.

583 In recent times, now that the heathen customs have been
178 undermined by the European occupation, we see that the husbands whose wives have gone to their family when sick and have died there, demand the return of the bride price from the family, but this is completely contrary to their old customs. In one case the husband could demand the return of the bride price, namely, if the wife had left while healthy to go to her family and had died there.

562 Buying or Trading of Women. The woman was also in many
439 cases an acknowledged object of trade. The great village chiefs, among others Ibuka and Yoma, of whom we shall speak further, carried on a sort of woman trade. With European articles and also native currency, they went to other districts of the Equator [Province] to buy women with them, just like someone who goes to market, even though no public markets where women were sold actually existed.